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SUBJECT: SECRETARY CLINTON'S APRIL 15 CONVERSATION WITH
HAITIAN PRIME MINISTER MICHELE PIERRE-LOUIS

[1](#)1. (U) Classified by: WHA Assistant Secretary Thomas A. Shannon. Reasons: 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)2. (U) April 15, 2009; 1400 EDT; Washington, D.C.

[1](#)3. (U) Participants:

U.S.

The Secretary

Chief of Staff and Counselor Cheryl Mills

WHA A/S Thomas A. Shannon

PA A/S Robert Wood, Acting

Ambassador to Haiti Janet A. Sanderson

WHA/CAR Joseph Tilghman, notetaker

Haiti

Prime Minister Michele Pierre-Louis

Ambassador to the U.S. Raymond Joseph

Foreign Minister Alrich Nicolas

Finance Minister Daniel Dorsainville

Communications Advisor Jean Jean-Pierre

[1](#)4. (SBU) Summary: In a wide-ranging discussion, the Secretary and Prime Minister Pierre-Louis focused on results of the April 14 donors' conference, security, economic development, counternarcotics, the current U.S. travel warning, Temporary Protected Status, bilateral relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and opportunities for renewable energy. End Summary.

[1](#)5. (SBU) The Secretary opened the meeting by expressing her personal commitment to Haiti, and calling for honest and open dialogue in a common effort to determine how best to meet Haiti's needs. The Prime Minister said she was encouraged by the United States' renewed engagement, which would help energize Haiti's own efforts to work with us and the international community. Fostering investment to create jobs would be critical, she continued.

April 14 Donors Conference

[1](#)6. (SBU) The Secretary outlined the \$57 million U.S. immediate assistance package she had announced at the conference, specifying there would be \$20 million for debt service obligations payable directly to multilateral banks, \$20 million for job creation, \$2.13 million for counternarcotics assistance, and \$15 million for food aid. The United States was not in a position to write a check directly to the Government of Haiti, she elaborated, but expected that close collaboration and focus on an effective spending plan would produce quick results for Haiti's people. The Secretary mentioned that additional help would come once the Government of Haiti reached completion point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC), at which time Haiti would be relieved of approximately \$4 million per month in debt payments. (Note: Haiti expects to reach HIPC completion

point in the summer of 2009. End note.)

¶17. (SBU) The Secretary underscored the continuing important role security would play as a platform for Haiti's development, saying that the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) should remain through 2012. She mentioned the key leadership role Brazil has played in MINUSTAH.

Counternarcotics

¶18. (SBU) The Prime Minister stated her grave concern about the corrupting influence of narco-trafficking, saying she had raised this as a critical security issue when she had met with Vice President Biden the previous day (septel). Anything the United States could do to help Haiti would be important. The Secretary replied that the drug trade was like a cancer, draining the life out of a society, and the United States was prepared to do what it could to help Haiti address the problem.

Travel Warning

¶19. (SBU) The Prime Minister urged updating of the Department's travel warning, which unnecessarily discouraged travel and investment. It was based on an assessment of the security situation as it was some time ago when, for example, there were many more kidnappings than there are now. The Prime Minister recounted that Haitian-American businessmen she met with in New York April 13 had said the travel warning was inhibiting investment. The Secretary said she would look into the matter.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

¶10. (C) The Secretary raised TPS, acknowledging it was a crucial issue for Haiti because of its potential impact in increasing remittances and decreasing the burden on Haitian families as they struggled to recover from last year's hurricanes. The Secretary said that she had discussed the matter with DHS Secretary Napolitano, and that the Administration would give due consideration to any renewed request for TPS. The Prime Minister mentioned that President Preval had sent two letters to President Bush in 2008 asking for TPS, but had never received a reply. (Note: Former DHS Secretary Chertoff sent a letter to President Preval in December 2008 declining to grant TPS. End note.)

Haiti-Dominican Republic Relations

¶11. (C) The Secretary advised she would be traveling to the Dominican Republic after visiting Haiti on April 16, and asked the Prime Minister if there were any cross-border issues the Secretary could raise in her meeting with President Fernandez. In reply, the Prime Minister did not mention any specific issues, but referred to the bilateral commission that the two countries had revived to consider matters of common concern such as drug trafficking, border control, migration, and trade. The Prime Minister advised that Presidents Preval and Fernandez would meet in late May as part of a consultative process to set an agenda for the commission. The Secretary undertook to advise President Fernandez that the United States was pleased with formation of the commission and the dialogue it represented.

Renewable Energy

¶12. (SBU) The Secretary noted that development of renewable energy resources might be a good area for

cooperation between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and mentioned a prominent ridge near the border that might offer an opportunity for the joint development of a wind farm. The Prime Minister informed the Secretary that the EU had recently financed a wind map for Haiti, and that Brazil was financing a major hydro-electric project.

CLINTON